



Business English at Work

Second Edition

Chapter 4

Noun Functions and Plurals



Objectives

- Identify proper and common nouns.
- Identify functions of nouns in sentences.
- Recognize the differences among singular, plural, and collective nouns.
- Form plurals of singular nouns, numbers, letters, and abbreviations.
- Form plurals of foreign and irregular nouns.

Classes of Nouns

Persons	<i>assistant</i> <i>Bill Gates</i>
Places	<i>college</i> <i>Switzerland</i>
Things	<i>computer</i> <i>e-mail</i>
Activities	<i>walking</i> <i>singing</i>
Ideas and Qualities	<i>freedom</i> <i>sincerity</i>

Common and Proper Nouns

Common Nouns

- Refer to general persons, places, things, activities, ideas, or qualities
- Are not capitalized

magazine

employee

dictionary

Proper Nouns

- Refer to specific persons, places, things, activities, ideas, or qualities
- Are capitalized

Wall Street

January

Grand Canyon

Functions of Nouns

● Singular or compound subject

Nouns often appear as singular or compound subjects of sentences. Their usual placement in the sentence is before the verb.

*Many **people** use the Internet for research purposes.*

***George and Kim** work for an online clothing store.*

● Direct Object

A direct object often involves a noun that receives the action of a verb. A direct object appears after the verb. Direct objects may be singular or plural.

*The administrator requested new **computers**.*

continued

Functions of Nouns

● Indirect Object

An indirect object usually appears before a direct object and directly after a verb in a sentence. Indirect objects usually follow verbs such as **buy, sell, send, ask, give**.

*I bought **Laurie** a docking station for her computer.*

● Object of a Preposition

A prepositional phrase consists of a preposition, the object of the preposition, which is a noun or pronoun, and its modifiers. More than one prepositional phrase may appear in a sentence.

*The seminar focused **on using the Internet** and its use **in small businesses**.*

continued

Functions of Nouns

- **Subject Complement**

A subject complement (predicate noun) follows a linking verb and renames the subject.

*Alice Hampton is our help desk **technician**.*

- **Appositive**

The term appositive means one noun renames another noun or pronoun. The appositive immediately follows the noun it renames.

*Alice Hampton, our help desk **technician**, recommends that we update our software.*

continued

Functions of Nouns

● Direct Address

A noun in direct address names the individual being addressed.

*Tim, please design new icons for our Website.
We believe, Tim, that you know more about
our Website than anyone else.*

Plural Forms of Nouns

- Plural nouns name two or more persons, places, things, activities, ideas, or qualities.

To form plurals of most common and proper nouns, add **s** to the singular nouns.

File

files

page

pages

desk

desks

keystroke

keystrokes

Collective Nouns

Collective nouns name a group of persons or things.

- If the group acts as a unit, the collective noun is singular.
*The department has recommended **its** selection for new database software.*
- If the sentence implies that the members of a team, committee, etc., are acting individually, the collective noun is plural.

*The committee received the surveys last week and were asked to return **their** responses today.*

Plurals of Nouns Ending in . . .

ch

sh

s

x

or

z

Add es

watch

watches

dish

dishes

glass

glasses

box

boxes

waltz

waltzes

Exception

quiz

quizzes

Plurals of Nouns Ending in . . . F, fe, or ff

- Many singular nouns require only an **s** for their plural forms.
- For other singular nouns, change the **f** or **fe** to **ve** and add an **s**.

belief	beliefs
shelf	shelves
wife	wives

- Both forms are acceptable for a few nouns.
wharf wharfs/wharves

Plural Forms of Nouns . . .

When a noun ends in **y** and the letter before the **y** is a vowel, add an **s** to make the noun plural.

delay

delays

key

keys

boy

boys

play

plays

essay

essays

Plural Forms of Nouns . . .

When a noun ends in **y** and the letter before the **y** is a consonant, change the **y** to **i** and add **es** to make the noun plural.

policy

copy

accessory

facility

policies

copies

accessories

facilities

Plural Forms of Nouns . . .

When the noun ends in **o** and is preceded by a vowel, add an **s** to form the plural.

stereo

stereos

tattoo

tattoos

portfolio

portfolios

When the noun ends in **o** and is preceded by a consonant, add **s** or **es** to form the plural.

photo

photos

potato

potatoes

Irregular Noun Plurals and Special Nouns

- Some singular nouns have irregular plurals.

Singular

woman

foot

mouse

goose

child

ox

Plural

women

feet

mice

geese

children

oxen

continued

Irregular Noun Plurals and Special Nouns

- Some nouns have the same singular and plural forms.

Singular

deer

sheep

moose

species

series

Plural

deer

sheep

moose

species

series

continued

Irregular Noun Plurals and Special Nouns

- Some nouns that end in **s** look like plurals; but, depending on their use, they may have singular meanings.

news

physics

ethics

politics

- Most nouns that represent ideas or qualities have no plural forms.

honesty

integrity

patience

innocence

- Some nouns are never singular.

proceeds

savings

goods

earnings

Foreign Nouns

- May use foreign or English plural forms.
- One form may be preferred over the other, or each form may have its own definition.

**Foreign
Singular**

syllabus

census

index

criterion

**Foreign
Plural**

syllabi (preferred)

indices (math)

criteria (preferred)

**English
Plural**

syllabuses

censuses

indexes (books)

criteria

Abbreviations

- Most abbreviations form their plurals by adding **s** to the singular.

Singular Abbreviation

apt.

bldg.

Dr.

Co.

Plural Abbreviation

apts.

bldgs.

Drs.

Cos.

Measurements

- Most measurement abbreviations are the same in their singular and plural forms.

Singular Abbreviation

foot ft

ounce oz

pound lb

Plural Abbreviation

feet ft

ounces oz

pounds lb

Numbers

- Numbers expressed in figures form their plurals by adding **s**.

Singular Number

7

1960

876

Plural Number

7**s**

1960**s**

876**s**

- Numbers expressed in figures form their plurals by adding **s**.

Singular Number

forty

three

Plural Number

fort**ies**

thre**es**

Letters

- Capital letters form their plurals by adding **s**.
- To avoid confusion, add an apostrophe before the **s** to the plurals of **A**, **I**, **M**, and **U**.
- To avoid confusion in meaning, all lowercase letters form their plurals by adding an apostrophe and **s**.

Singular Letter

D

A

i

Plural Letter

Ds

A's

i's



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End of

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